



Danville
Fire
Department

Strategic
Plan

January 2014

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Introduction

The Danville Fire Department (DFD) has an honored tradition of providing caring, excellent service. As our community continues to change and the demand for services changes too, it has become necessary to be more strategic in our efforts to anticipate and adjust to those changes and to continue to grow and improve as an organization.

The City of Danville is an independent city located in Southside Virginia founded on the labor of tobacco and textiles. The community instituted its first paid fire department on January 1, 1884. Multiple annexations and 130 years later, DFD resources include 7 stations, 144 personnel, and eight front-line apparatus. The department serves 43 square miles and a population of 43,000 with a long list of fire, medical, and community services.

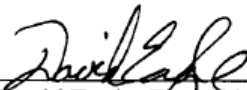
DFD proudly hosts one of thirteen state-supported Level III Regional Hazardous Materials Response Teams and a local Technical Rescue Team trained in High Angle, Trench, Confined Space, Structural Collapse, Vehicle Extrication, and Water Rescue. The department also has responsibility for Emergency Management and the City's 911 Emergency Communication Center. Danville earned a Class 2 public protection classification from the Insurance Services Office, one of only seven agencies in the Commonwealth to hold this distinction.

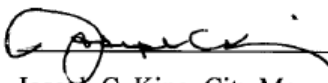
Gone are the days of merely responding to emergencies; the modern fire service has equal focus on fire prevention and safety education. The department has a history of adapting to the size and needs of the community, through periods of tremendous growth and, unfortunately, through economic decline. As the City of Danville works to rebrand itself with technology, innovation, and a downtown revitalization, the Danville Fire Department remains committed to service and prepared for change.

The strategic plan, on the pages that follow, sets forth a comprehensive approach to those commitments. The planning process has been challenging, but it has allowed our team to be actively involved in ongoing evaluations and initiatives. The vision and mission

statements define our priorities and provide our team with clear direction. Additionally, this plan identifies the core values that embody how our team will strive to operate individually and collectively as we carry out the mission of the department. The goals, strategies, and tactics presented will allow us to work toward our shared vision and be in tune with the priorities of our city government as we honor our community's trust.

We extend our thanks and appreciation for the stakeholders who contributed their time, ideas, views, and support as part of this planning process. Through the hard work of our members and as our continuous effort to meet or exceed the expectations of those that we serve, I'm proud to present the DFD's first strategic plan.

 Date: 3/27/14
David Eagle, Fire Chief

 Date: 3/27/14
Joseph C. King, City Manager

Strategic Planning

According to the Alliance for Nonprofit Management, strategic planning is a management tool that helps an organization to focus its energy, to ensure that members of the organization are working toward the same goals, and to assess and adjust the organization's direction in response to a changing environment (Alliance for Nonprofit Management, n.d.).

In addition, the Commission on Fire Accreditation International Fire and Emergency Services describes strategic planning as a flexible, dynamic, and continuous process that

- provides short-term direction,
- sets goals and objectives,
- optimizes use of resources, and
- builds a shared vision.

For the Danville Fire Department, the establishment of a strategic plan is a deliberate effort to prepare for the future with a variety of goals, actions, and activities which unify management, employees, stakeholders, and customers.

The City of Danville has followed the strategic planning process recommended by the Center for Public Safety Excellence:

1. Organization planning meeting
2. Internal/external stakeholder engagement
3. Develop/revise mission statement, vision statement, and organization values
4. Conduct data analysis review
5. Establish target completion dates
6. Develop strategic goals, objectives, and initiatives/tasks
7. Finalize plan
8. Implement strategic plan
9. [future] Monitor progress and revise plan as necessary.

Stakeholders

A successful strategic plan is the result of extensive input, assessment, discussion, and prioritizing by a group of stakeholders.

Internal Stakeholders. The input of all DFD personnel is valued and actively sought throughout the process of developing plans and identifying direction. At least twice a year, full shift staff meetings are held to share information, progress, and accomplishments; to discuss issues; and to review expectations and goals. Senior staff meetings are conducted quarterly, and these include an annual planning session.

Specific to the strategic planning process, an anonymous city-wide employee survey in the summer of 2009 revealed a number of strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities. This was followed by a directive from the Fire Chief in spring 2012 for each of the 21 fire companies (7 stations, 3 shifts) to submit observations, suggestions, and opinions on the department's mission, its core values, and perceived challenges, strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities. The results were combined, and senior staff met several times to review and discuss the feedback and to identify priorities. The consensus has been documented, presented during full staff meetings, adopted by the department, and published in this strategic plan.

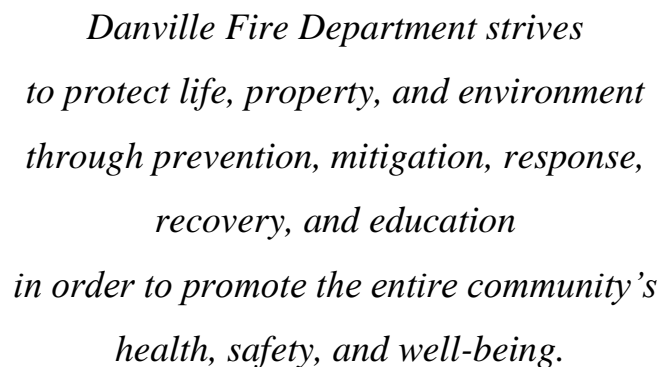
External Stakeholders. DFD's external stakeholders are citizens, non-governmental support agencies, mutual aid agencies, fellow city department directors and employees, and the local governing body. Citizens frequently share feedback directly to DFD employees or via City Council members. There is also regular interaction with regional and state entities to review legislative policies, training standards, and industry trends.

City department heads meet together bimonthly as a group and individually on a monthly basis with the City Manager, in part to ensure that each department understands and supports the goals and objectives established by the administration and governing body. These are reflected in DFD's goals, which also contain strategies for formalizing and improving the community feedback process.

Mission and Vision

According to Mark Wallace in *Fire Department Strategic Planning*, an effective mission statement must contain three components: what functions the department performs, for whom those functions are performed, and how those functions are performed.

The modern fire department is expected to provide far more than fire suppression and rescue. After extensive review of employee survey feedback and discussions during full staff meetings, the Danville Fire Department updated its mission statement to the following consensus:



*Danville Fire Department strives
to protect life, property, and environment
through prevention, mitigation, response,
recovery, and education
in order to promote the entire community's
health, safety, and well-being.*

A successful organization can describe its optimal desired future state. In an article for Smart@Work, CEO Jannell Evans says a vision statement should “provide guidance and inspiration as to what an organization is focused on achieving.” DFD created a vision statement which encompasses everyday tasks and long-term improvements, defines the agency’s culture, and encourages personnel to focus on what’s important.

The Danville Fire Department's Vision

Our vision is to be recognized as an Internationally Accredited Fire Department and to be known for excellence in timely, courteous, effective service delivery to our community.

Our workforce is honest, reliable, and dedicated to the highest ethical standards. We work hard to maintain a good reputation and to inspire public trust and confidence. We respect one another and the diverse community we serve. Our team will remain safe, skilled, and successful with comprehensive training and development opportunities.

Our physical resources are managed responsibly and effectively. We explore new, more efficient technologies to improve the quality and scope of our programs and operational services. We strive for ongoing improvement and carefully plan our facility and equipment maintenance and replacement.

Our leadership and workforce will hold one another accountable for fulfilling our mission, living our organizational values, and reaching our goals. All employees will value a professional atmosphere where cooperation is expected and involvement in decision making is encouraged. We will build strong relationships and collaborate with local, regional, and state partners and support agencies.

Our community will know we care. We will proactively identify and analyze our community's evolving risks and needs to determine the best strategies for such dynamic demands. We will improve emergency preparedness and expand our response capabilities. We will keep each other and the public well-informed with complete, consistent, accurate, frequent, and clear communications.

Our vision is to honor our community's trust, to continuously improve as an organization, to perform with integrity, and to consistently meet or exceed the expectations of our members and the community we serve.

Core Values

To better understand an organization and its strategic issues, it is critical to first identify the values those in the organization share. Shared values shape an organization and influence how its members face plans and challenges, both immediate and future.

Danville Fire Department supports the City of Danville's Employee Core Values and is committed to the city slogan of "We do the right things right." We share a dedication to the following core values:

Customer and Community Focus	We value timely and exceptional service to the public, to our team, and to the city organization. We serve all in a caring, courteous, respectful, compassionate, and reliable manner. We work hard every day to improve the community's health, safety, and well-being.
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Peak Performance	We value effective and efficient service at the individual and team level. We support each other in being capable, knowledgeable, skilled, responsible, and accountable. We foster success and improvement.
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Integrity and Transparency	We value the trust and confidence of the public and of our team. We are committed to serving with honesty, trustworthiness, honor, loyalty, and ethical behavior. We strive to keep each other and the public well informed with frequent and accurate communication.
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Diversity and Inclusiveness	We value respect for diversity of people and belief. We give equal treatment to all in our team, our city organization, and our community. We do not tolerate discrimination.
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Safety and Valor	We value life. We take every precaution to prevent harm while facing threat, danger, and discomfort with courage and bravery. We treat each other as family, and we view the community as an extension of our family.
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Services Provided

Though the community is aware of the fire department's emergency services in a general sense, many have little knowledge of the specialized services and extensive public education programs provided. These services align with the department's mission, core values, and objectives.

- Emergency Communication
- Emergency Management
- Fire Suppression
- Pre-Hospital Emergency Medical Services
- Hazardous Materials
- Hazardous Conditions
- Technical Rescue
- Public Services
 - Child restraint seat installations
 - Blood pressure checks
 - Non-emergency assistance
- Fire Prevention and Safety Education
 - Get Alarmed Danville
 - Safety House
 - Exit Drills in the Home
 - Injury Prevention
 - Fire Extinguishers
 - School Programs
 - Safety for the Elderly
 - Home Safety Inspections

For a detailed description of these services and how they are provided, please see the Danville Fire Department Standards of Cover, available on the city's website.

Critical Issues

A strategic plan involves intentionally choosing a desired future, setting goals that describe that future, and developing an approach to achieving those goals. Therefore, an organization must first be aware of its environment – both internal and external – and the issues and threats which may delay or prevent that future. Understanding these strategic issues is the main purpose of strategic planning and is therefore a key component.

The following issues were identified during an internal assessment and survey:

- Federal, state, and local mandates
- The number of executive personnel at or near retirement
- Personal and career development guidelines
- Deficiencies in transport availability and response times
- Budget and revenue limitations
- Public perception

Strategic Initiatives

A plan cannot succeed without clearly defined priorities and actionable outcomes. The following initiatives provide department personnel with clear direction, address known and anticipated issues, and respond to the concerns of the community.

1. Advocate for a safer community.
2. Be recognized in the community and throughout the region as a leader in excellence for fire and emergency service delivery.
3. Improve internal and external communication.
4. Practice good leadership and governance.
5. Implement a formal workforce development plan.
6. Develop a physical resources improvement plan to evaluate facilities, apparatus, and equipment to ensure safe and efficient services.
7. Improve community preparation for and coordination during emergencies.
8. Provide high quality, efficient emergency communications.

Specific strategies, tactics, and anticipated outcomes for each goal are also identified.

Goal 1: Advocate for a safer community.	
Strategy 1A:	Develop and implement a strategy for soliciting community input and addressing customer expectations and priorities.
Tactics:	1. Solicit feedback at regular opportunities such as the Citizen Academy, Community Day, public education events, and targeted organizational meetings; share that feedback with senior staff; and include that feedback in planning sessions.
Leadership:	Senior Staff; Fire Marshal's Office
Review:	A summary of external stakeholder involvement and feedback will be included in each release of the department's strategic plan.
Strategy 1B:	Evaluate and update fire prevention and life safety education strategies based on community risk.
Tactics:	1. Evaluate fire call reports for statistical trends and socio-economic factors to better target education and outreach.
Leadership:	Fire Marshal's Office

Review:	An annual report summarizing call frequencies by type, location, and census-based demographics and making recommendation will be submitted to department administration.
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Goal 2: Be recognized in the community and throughout the region as a leader in excellence for fire and emergency service delivery.	
Strategy 2A:	Achieve and maintain status as an internationally accredited agency through the Center for Public Safety Excellence.
Tactics:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Submission for accreditation in first quarter 2014. 2. Submission of subsequent annual CPSE reports.
Leadership:	Senior Staff
Review:	Annual review and update of strategic plan, performance measures, and required reports.
Strategy 2B:	Maintain a Class 2 rating through the Insurance Services Office.
Tactics:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Request ISO evaluation by end-of-year 2014. 2. Stay informed of ISO requirements via seminars and the internet. 3. Monitor department compliance
Leadership:	Senior Staff
Review:	Hold an ISO rating of Class 2.
Strategy 2C:	Establish and strengthen community and regional partnerships.
Tactics:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Foster opportunity for involvement with industry peers and professional networks (WVEMS, VEMA, VFCA, PRCJTA). 2. Obtain and maintain statements of understanding with support agencies (i.e. Red Cross, Salvation Army, Danville Public Schools, Danville Social Services).
Leadership:	Chief of Technical and Support Services; Senior Staff
Review:	Annual review of organization memberships, conference/seminar attendance, and inter-agency agreements.
Strategy 2D:	Ensure compliance with nationally recognized standards for call processing, turnout, and response times.
Tactics:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Compile and analyze response data and regularly share the results with the department.
Leadership:	Chief of Technical and Support Services
Review:	Monthly call summary email revised to include response times beginning July 2014

Goal 3: Improve internal and external communication	
Strategy 3A:	Foster open communication within the department.
Tactics:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Improve and expand the use of technology to make standards, policies, and performance information readily and openly available. 2. Solicit feedback to evaluate effectiveness of communications through the ranks and shift to shift.
Leadership:	Senior Staff
Review:	Annual review, update, and change notification for “Standard Operating Guidelines” and “Rules and Regulations.” Employee feedback during regularly scheduled staff meetings.
Strategy 3B:	Improve communications with the community.
Tactics:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Maintain the department website. 2. Expand and formalize use of social media. 3. Continue use of the local “Fire Watch” television show.
Leadership:	Senior Staff; Fire Marshal’s Office
Review:	Website will remain current; community involvement and outreach will be discussed during the annual strategic planning sessions.

Goal 4: Practice good leadership and governance.	
Strategy 4A:	Maintain department rules, regulations, guidelines, and policies which meet industry best practices and current regulation.
Tactics:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Evaluate and revise the “Rules and Regulations” and the “Standard Operating Guidelines.”
Leadership:	Senior Staff; Training Division; Chief of Operations; SOG Committee
Review:	All department rules, regulations, guidelines, and policies shall be reviewed, revised, updated, documented, and posted within 24 months.
Strategy 4B:	Evaluate employees on clearly defined job-specific competencies.
Tactics:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Define the role specific competencies for each position as provided by the Department of Human Resources. 2. Implement a new employee performance evaluation system.
Leadership:	Senior Staff; Human Resources
Review:	Annual employee performance evaluations

Strategy 4C:	Aggressively research and identify alternative funding opportunities.
Tactics:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Monitor grant opportunities and apply for applicable grants. 2. Foster inter-agency partnerships which might share costs.
Leadership:	Senior Staff
Review:	Annual summary report of grants obtained/denied and subsequent use of funds posted on the city website.

Goal 5: Implement a formal workforce development plan.	
Strategy 5A:	Develop a process to attract and recruit a competent and diverse workforce.
Tactics:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Revive the Human Resource committee. 2. Investigate recruitment opportunities at job fairs, public school career days, and public sector employment postings.
Leadership:	Senior Staff ; HR committee
Review:	Recruitment efforts will be discussed during the annual strategic planning sessions.
Strategy 5B:	Provide training and mentoring which promote career development and ensure peak performance.
Tactics:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Prepare for department attrition by identifying potential career paths, encouraging mentorship, and creating a formal succession plan. 2. Develop a training program that identifies and maintains basic job skills while also providing opportunities for advanced skill development.
Leadership:	Training Division; Senior Staff
Review:	Annual evaluation of the content and effectiveness of training program; formal succession plan completed and distributed within 24 months.
Strategy 5C:	Create an employee health and wellness plan for personal development.
Tactics:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Evaluate health status of 24-hour shift personnel. 2. Develop fitness standards. 3. Implement a health and wellness plan, possibly with the assistance of a new committee.
Leadership:	Training Division; Senior Staff
Review:	Complete and distribute a health and wellness plan within 18 months; summarize the results of the annual physicals to monitor effectiveness.

Goal 6: Develop a long-term physical resources improvement plan to evaluate facilities, apparatus and equipment to ensure safe and efficient services.	
Strategy 6A:	Conduct a comprehensive evaluation of facilities, apparatus, and equipment to describe condition, to identify upcoming maintenance, and to propose improvements.
Tactics:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Construction of new fire Headquarters and 911 Communication Center 2. Submit 5-year CIP plan for station maintenance and apparatus replacement 3. Create and maintain a 15-year apparatus and equipment replacement plan
Leadership:	Assistant Chief, Operations
Review:	Annual report summarizing the condition of facilities and identifying anticipated needs and improvements starting fiscal year 2015; create a 15-year apparatus and equipment replacement plan within 12 months

Goal 7: Improve community preparation for and coordination during emergencies.	
Strategy 7A:	Evaluate and update Emergency Operation Plan and train with stakeholders.
Tactics:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Prepare for the 2014 review of the Emergency Operation Plan by VDEM. 2. Schedule a table-top training exercise which includes internal and external stakeholders. 3. Update the Sheltering and Evacuation Plan.
Leadership:	Assistant Chief, Technical and Support Services
Review:	Receipt of approved status with VDEM by fourth quarter 2014.
Strategy 7B:	Improve emergency alert and communication protocols.
Tactics:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Configure and test emergency notification system. 2. Assess and document use of weather alerts and WebEOC reports.
Leadership:	Assistant Chief, Technical and Support Services
Review:	Conduct an emergency notification callout in conjunction with a statewide drill; completed protocol will be posted with Emergency Communication Center documentation

Strategy 7C:	Improve community education on emergency preparedness.
Tactics:	1. Develop, propose, and deliver strategies for educating the community on preparedness, mitigation, and recovery possibly via social media, local television programs, outreach
Leadership:	Assistant Chief, Technical and Support Services; Fire Marshal's Office; Public Information Officer
Review:	Community education and outreach events will be posted on the city website and discussed during the annual strategic planning sessions.

Goal 8: Provide high quality, efficient emergency communications.	
Strategy 8A:	Maintain basic skills, increase training opportunities, and encourage professional growth.
Tactics:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensure all telecommunicators are trained to meet the minimum professional standards in the Public Safety disciplines (Law Enforcement, Fire and EMS) as recognized by the Department of Criminal Justice and International Academies of Emergency Dispatch within 6 months of hiring. 2. Provide training beyond basic requirements to all dispatchers on an ongoing basis in advanced techniques and technology as funding allows.
Leadership:	Emergency Communications Coordinator; Telecommunicator Supervisors
Review:	Daily and weekly checklists reviewed; certifications checked; training offered on regular basis
Strategy 8B:	Improve overall response times to requests for service.
Tactics:	1. Evaluate Pro QA processes and develop methodologies to minimize processing time and to assure the appropriate, safe and timely response to customers.
Leadership:	Emergency Communications Coordinator; Telecommunicator Supervisors
Review:	Monthly reports summarized against SOP.

Strategy 8C:	Enhance relationships with other response divisions, departments, and agencies.
Tactics:	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Develop and implement an exchange program where personnel from the ECC and external agencies are scheduled for a ride-along or “sit-in” to observe each other’s perspectives and to assist in the understanding of needs and circumstances between the field and dispatch.2. Offer customized training on shared tasks and responsibilities for which ECC personnel is certified.
Leadership:	Emergency Communications Coordinator, Telecommunicator Supervisors coordinate with Police Administration, EMS Agency Heads
Review:	Employees provide a written summary of observations and “lessons learned” during the ride-along.

Performance Measurement

Overall success of a strategic plan is not measured solely by accomplishment of initiatives. Instead, success is evident in the support of personnel, the cooperation of the authority having jurisdiction (City Council), and the satisfaction of the community served. Most importantly, services and programs will continue to benefit the community in a timely, efficient, and effective manner.

The Danville Fire Department has chosen to use a combination of the following measures to evaluate performance against the plan:

- **Inputs:** Number and capacity of physical resources and personnel available; budget and financial resources
- **Outputs:** Number and type of services provided
- **Efficiency:** Comparison of inputs to outputs
- **Service Quality:** Measure of customer satisfaction; comparison of
- **Outcomes:** Noticeable or measurable consequences associated with a program/service

To that end, Danville Fire Department is committed to annually reviewing and revising this strategic plan.

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